

Environmental, Economic and Human Resource Sustainability for Community Tourism

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Presentation Focus

- Travel and Tourism Context and Trends
- Role of Tourism Action Committees
- Sustainability Defined
- Case Studies – Sustainability Good Practices
- Key Sustainability Lessons

Travel and Tourism Context

- Major source markets in North America, UK, Europe still feeling effects of the **global recession** – slower recovery
- Increasing oil prices = **increasing** trade, travel and living **costs**
- Long haul **travel cost increasing** due to increased taxes airport, security and airline fees; airline and flight consolidation
- + **more travel hassle** with increasing security and entry requirements + **more competition** from Egypt, Dubai etc.
- **Changing trends** - aging populations, decreasing family travel, peaking all-inclusive travel, more independent and experiential travelers

Motivators of Consumer Behaviour

■ Before:

- Hedonism
- Flaunting Wealth
- Conspicuous Consumption

■ After:

- Friends/Family
- Self-Improvement
- Social Responsibility
- Health
- Spirituality
- Passion

Future Trends in Consumer Behaviour

- Education and self-improvement
- Creativity
- Friends, family and togetherness
- Community Involvement
- Environment and eco-awareness

Turning Trends into Action

- Don't just sell experiences – sell **meaningful experiences**.
- Enhance the **learning opportunities** in your offerings.
- Give your visitors the **tools to be creative**.
- Create experiences that offer **personal satisfaction**.
- Create environments that foster **togetherness**.

Turning Trends into Action

- Offer visitors a way to **participate and contribute.**
- Tell visitors how their participation is **benefitting others.**
- Use **images** promoting these trends in your marketing.
- Stay on top of **trends.**

Opportunities for Caribbean

- Experiential travel demand will increase revenues - need to **refocus the tourism product** away from sun, sea, sand Focus on **product** and the **value added** to the travel experience – not price - to meet changing travel tastes for unique experiences
- Growth in **independent travel** - Focus on 35+ age groups with higher spending power and highest propensity for independent travel
- Focus on getting **more spend per visitor** – not just on increasing visitor numbers at any cost

David Redekop - The Conference Board of Canada

Translation

- Understand what distinguishes your destination - the competitive advantages
- Develop, promote and sell products that are unique and innovative
- Focus on target markets that will buy them
- Monitor and evaluate results and customer feedback to enhance product offerings and visitor experiences

Experiential Tourism

Tourism which encompasses **ecotourism, nature, heritage, cultural, soft adventure tourism, rural and community tourism.** “According to a 2001 UNWTO analysis, sun-and sand resort tourism, for decades the staple of Caribbean tourism, has now “matured as a market” and its growth is projected to remain flat. In contrast, both cruise tourism and “**experiential**” tourism were among the sectors expected to grow most quickly during the coming two decades.” (Martha Honey)

Cultural Tourism

*"...cultural tourists tend to be older, better educated and **earn more money** than the travelling public as a whole. They generally **spend more money** on holiday, **stay longer** in a particular area and **participate in more activities** than other tourists."*

*- Andrea Hausmann **

*"Cultural Tourism: Marketing Challenges and Opportunities for German Cultural Heritage",
International Journal of Heritage Studies, Vol 13, No. 2, March 2007, p 175*

Source: Mary Mahon Jones – Mahon Jones and Associates

Travel Values & Behaviours



Role of Tourism Action Committees

- Act as lobbyists
- Promote community linkages
- Identify needs and opportunities
- Liaise with and report to National Tourism Organizations (NTOs)
- Facilitate sustainable tourism development

Sustainable Tourism

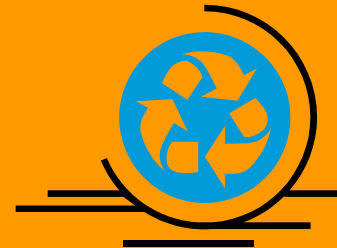
“...the **optimal use of** social, natural, cultural and financial **resources** for national development on an **equitable and self-sustaining** basis to provide a **unique visitor experience** and an **improved quality of life** through **partnerships** among government, the private sector and communities.”
(CTO)

Three Dimensions

1. Environmental
2. Socio-cultural
3. Economic

Environmental Sustainability

- Making optimal use of environmental resources
- Maintaining ecological processes
- Conserving natural resources and biodiversity



Goals

- **Physical integrity:**
 - maintaining and enhancing the quality of landscapes (urban and rural)
 - avoiding the physical and visual degradation of the environment
- Maintaining/restoring built heritage and traditional architecture e.g. chattel/plantation houses
- Land use planning, zoning regulation, environmental management

Goals

■ **Biological Diversity:**

- supporting the conservation of natural areas, habitats and wildlife
 - minimizing damage to them
- National Parks, biospheres, botanical gardens – terrestrial biodiversity
 - Marine Parks, turtle conservation, whale watching, Underwater Sculpture Museums – artificial reefs– marine biodiversity
 - Conservation education programmes & Codes of Conduct
 - User fees/donations to support conservation efforts

Caribbean World Heritage Sites

| | |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| Belize (1) | Haiti (1) |
| Bermuda (1) | Puerto Rico (1) |
| Cuba (9) | Saint Kitts/Nevis (1) |
| Curacao (1) | Saint Lucia (1) |
| Dominica (1) | Suriname (2) |
| Dominican Republic (1) | Venezuela (3) |

Goals

- **Resource Efficiency:**
 - minimizing the use of scarce and non-renewable resources in the development and operation of tourism facilities and services
- Energy efficiency measures
- Alternative energy e.g. solar, wind, geothermal
- Water conservation measures

Goals

- **Environmental Purity:**
 - minimizing the pollution of air, water and land and the generation of waste by tourism enterprises and visitors
- Environmental management systems and certification e.g. Green Globe
- Reducing carbon emissions/elimination of ozone depleting substances
- Proper waste management (reduce, reuse, recycle)

Economic Sustainability

- Ensuring viable long-term economic operations
- Providing socio-economic benefits to all stakeholders that are fairly distributed
- Contributing to poverty alleviation



Goals

- **Economic Viability:**
 - ensuring the viability and competitiveness of tourism destinations and enterprises, so that they are able to continue to prosper and deliver benefits in the long term

Goals

■ **Local Prosperity:**

- maximizing the contribution of tourism to the economic prosperity of the host destination, including the proportion of visitor spending that is retained locally

Human Resource Sustainability

- Stable employment and income earning opportunities



Goals

- **Employment Quality:**
 - Strengthening the number and quality of local jobs created and supported by tourism, including the level of pay, conditions of service and availability to all without discrimination by gender, race, disability or in other ways

Human Resource Development

- **Needs-based training** in communities:
 - Understanding Tourism, Sustainable Tourism
 - Project development, administration, management
 - Business management – financial, HR, marketing, PR sales, administration, service excellence, research, IT
 - Skills – traditional art & craft, performing arts, culinary, tour operation/guiding, interpretation, language/intercultural, defensive driving, conflict management, visitor information, accommodation management, website development, social media
 - Environmental/ natural resource management, safety and security, HIV/AIDS
 - Monitoring and evaluation

Training

- Specialized experts/skilled professionals (public & private sector)
- Volunteers (local/international)
- Experienced community members
- Seminars, webinars, conferences, study tours, exchanges, train-the-trainer, apprenticeship programs, tertiary level institutions/courses
- Trustworthy material – Publications, Internet resources

CASE STUDIES

Agrotourism Project Panama

- 2006 – Agreement signed between the Panama Tourism Institute and the Ministry of Agriculture
- Strategy - agro tourism promotion via the adaptation of farms with potential to operate at national level
- Strategy – alliances created with national and international agencies
- 116 farms signed up

Project Components

1. **Training** – HRD in gov't & private sector + development of tourism services work culture (HR sustainability)
2. **Project formulation & evaluation** – including guaranteeing project sustainability; infusing new ideas; securing financing (economic sustainability)
3. **Enviro-Aesthetic adaptation** – farms adapted re hygiene, waste, pesticide management, security, consideration for natural & social environment (environmental sustainability)

Project Components

4. **Promotion** – Internet & other media, publications, fairs, billboards, promotional videos, radio spots (economic sustainability)
5. **Project Control and follow-through** – Database created for the farms involved in the Program, internet used for national coordination. (economic sustainability)

Achievements

- Developed an implementation framework document “Strategic Guidelines for Agrotourism in Panama 2007-2011”
- 2008 – 20 farms received good practice certification for agriculture and security
- Formed a National Agrotourism Association
- Trained technicians, producers and community organizations

Ecotourism and Soft Adventure Project

Punta Islita Hotel
Punta Islita de Nandayure
Costa Rica

Punta Islita Hotel

- 1990 - Hotel established
- 1995 - Changed focus to ecotourism
- 1998 - Added soft adventure services
- 2001 – Custom-tailored services and marketing activities intensified
- Luxury eco resort

Punta Islita Hotel Services

- Accommodation – 34 rooms
- Spa, swimming pools, tennis, gym
- Canopy walks
- Mountain biking, horse riding, climbing etc.

Interest Groups and Role

- Municipality of Nandayure
- Punta Islita community
- Costa Rica Tourism Institute
- Ministry of Environment & Energy
- Work in total liaison with the local community in Punta Islita
- Collaboration with nearby communities in Corozalito, Pilas and Pueblo Nuevo

Project Funding

- 100% Costa Rican capital for:
 - Infrastructure (roads, bridges, trails, landing strip, telecommunications towers, hotel facilities etc.)
 - Community facilities (accommodation for employees, church, local store, meeting and activity hall)
 - Transport services
 - Ongoing training programme for all areas or operation

Environmental Sustainability

- **Contribution to natural area conservation:**
 - Biodiversity study resulting in management and development plan
 - Beach cleaning support
 - Blue Flag and Tourism Sustainability Certification from CR Tourism Institute
 - Various publications
 - Land purchase for forest conservation
 - Turtle conservation project in collaboration with Municipality & Ministry of Environment

Environmental Sustainability

- **Education and Interpretation:**
 - To enhance the quality of the hotel by incorporating cultural and environmental features to give visitors a unique, all-round experience
 - Training courses for local residents to enable them to identify the various opportunities in the area and to undertake their own projects

Environmental Sustainability

- **Environmental practices in development and operation of ecotourism facilities, establishments and services:**
 - Waste, water and energy management
 - Use of traditional materials and design for accommodation facilities etc.
 - Recycling policies in hotel
 - Waste reduction processes
 - Water supply for local population

Economic Sustainability

- **Marketing and promotion:**
 - Marketing and promotion methods & channels (print, web/Internet, tourism trade fairs, travel agencies, familiarization trips, broadcast media, word of mouth)
 - Membership in various organizations e.g. Small Luxury Hotels of the World

Economic Sustainability

- **Business Profitability:**
 - Not very affected by market fluctuations due to type of business and customer profile
 - Over 3,600 national and international customers per year from USA, Costa Rica, Europe

Social/HR Sustainability

- **Community involvement and benefits:**
 - Creation of direct and indirect job opportunities for communities
 - Capacity building programmes & training opportunities
 - Diversification of local economy away from strictly farming
 - Development of micro-entrepreneurs with investment assistance

Key Lessons in Environmental Sustainability

1. Stakeholder communication, collaboration and capacity building is needed to ensure natural resource sustainability.
2. Sensitisation improves community cooperation in collection of user fees for protected areas.
3. Develop adequate infrastructure to reduce the vulnerability of CBT to natural disasters.

Key Lessons in Economic Sustainability

1. Enabling tourism policy and supportive institutional arrangements and Champions can facilitate CBT development.
2. Tourism income is highly seasonal and variable.
3. Partnerships within community and between communities and external agencies are critical.
4. Community contribution increases sense of ownership and responsibility for project.
5. Easy access to finance is important.

Financing Tips for CBT Projects

- Thoroughly research projects and present them professionally to financial institutions
- Ensure accurate and realistic financial data
- Important to contribute equity to projects
- Keep updated business records

Financing Tips for CBT Projects

- Align your business with large tour operators and hotels
- Form tourism clusters based on type of attractions
- Develop cooperatives
- Obtain training in marketing/promotion

Key Lessons in Human Resource Sustainability

1. Long term external support for capacity building and product development is sometimes required for CBT associations.
2. Address social issues in the community to avoid compromising tourism product quality.
3. Train communities to understand tourism.
4. Seek in-kind technical advice, training, marketing and communications support from private sector.

Useful Websites

- Caribbean Tourism Organization (CTO)
www.onecaribbean.org
- The Travel Foundation
www.thetravelfoundation.org.uk
- Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA)
www.caribbeanagrotourism.com
- Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI) www.canari.org

Reference Material

- Making Tourism Count for the Local Economy in the Caribbean – Guidelines for Good Practice (CTO)
- Competing with the Best: Good Practices in Community-Based Tourism in the Caribbean (CTO)
- Development of a Strategic Business Management Model for the Sustainable Development of Heritage Tourism Products in the Caribbean (CTO)
- A Look to Successful Experiences of Agrotourism in Latin America (IICA)

Thank You

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